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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 17 October 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

We write to express our alarm about ongoing illegal Israeli activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the territory constituting the State of Palestine. The persistence of the illegal and provocative actions of the occupying Power in this regard continues to raise tensions and further destabilize the situation on the ground. While the State of Palestine remains committed to and continues to engage in the negotiations in good faith, Israel's ongoing aggression against the sovereignty, viability, territorial integrity and contiguity of the State of Palestine and the viability of the two-State solution are both cause for alarm and cause for deep doubts regarding the potential for success of the negotiations.

Most dangerously, extremist Israeli settlers, with the full protection and acquiescence of the Israeli occupying forces, continue to provoke and escalate tensions, particularly in Occupied East Jerusalem and specifically at Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The constant provocations and aggression against the sanctity of Palestinian cemeteries, churches and mosques, in particular Al-Aqsa Mosque, have the potential to bring about grave consequences for the entire region and the wider international community. We call on the international community, including the Security Council, to give due and immediate attention to this threat to international peace and security.

We regret to inform you that since the announcement by the parties of the resumption of negotiations, on 29 July, Israel, the occupying Power, has advanced approval of over 3,000 settlement units, and the confiscation of hundreds more dunums of Palestinian land. The latest announcement by Israel was made on 9 October, announcing the construction of 58 additional units in the settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev" north of Jerusalem. In this regard, it is imperative to highlight a report issued by the Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now, "Drastic Rise in Construction in the Settlements", which noted, among other things, a

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70 per cent rise in construction in the settlements from January to June 2013 compared with the same period in 2012, and that 86 per cent of construction had begun without any tenders. Additional reports indicate that Israel plans to exempt settlements from being obliged to publicize tenders, in an effort to reduce diplomatic pressures from such publication. These tactics only indicate further the true intention of Israel to build more settlements, rather than to act in accordance with international law in order to build confidence between the parties to achieve peace.

Clearly, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to perceive itself to be above the law, as indicated by its reckless, illegal behaviour. It is the responsibility of the international community, in particular the Security Council, to remind Israel of its obligations under the law, including humanitarian law, in accordance with article 49 (6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states that "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies". This grave breach is defined in Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a war crime.

At the same time, extremist Israeli settlers continue to wreak havoc and terror on the Palestinian people and their lands. As the olive harvest is under way, which is an important source of sustenance and a central component of our agricultural sector, settlers have destroyed hundreds of olive groves, including setting thousands of olive trees ablaze, leaving many Palestinian families without any crops to harvest, destroying livelihoods and further damaging the Palestinian economy. It is no surprise that settlers, a by-product of the Israeli occupation and settlements, would destroy a symbol of peace, the olive tree, as every settlement unit constructed erodes the prospects and the viability of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

It is against this backdrop that peace talks continue — an environment that is hardly conducive to the pursuit of peace, and reinforces the notion that Israel is using this period only to further entrench its settlement enterprise and its de facto annexation of Palestinian land. Yet, the State of Palestine remains committed to the peace process and the objective of peace and coexistence. We renew our call to the international community, in particular the Security Council, not to stand idly by as the two-State solution is destroyed by Israel's illegal colonization schemes. Serious efforts are needed to uphold international law, foremost respect of it by the occupying Power, to support and advance the peace process for the attainment by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, and independent in their State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 border, in accordance with international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 473 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 20 September 2013 (A/ES-10/603-S/2013/567), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations

being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations